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CDC Health Advisory

Distributed via Health Alert Network

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U.S. Terrorism Threat Level Increased to Orange

On Sunday, December 21, the nation's threat level was raised from elevated risk ("yellow") to high risk ("orange"), the second highest level of the Homeland Security Advisory System. The change was prompted by a belief on the part of the Department of Homeland Security that terrorists may attempt to attack the U.S.

The Department of Homeland Security is taking measures across the country to raise preparedness to their highest levels. This includes increased security at U.S. borders and in the transportation, oil and food industries, as well as the mobilization of response and recovery teams across the nation.

At this time, public health officials are urged to be fully prepared to respond to terrorist attacks.

Specific Public Health activities prudent at this time include:

- Ensure that surveillance and reporting measures are active and alerted to report any unusual disease or disease patterns, or chemical or radiation events;
- Review specific emergency response plans;
- Evaluate facilities and personnel to ensure the safety and security of both;
- Educate employees on emergency procedures;
- Ensure sufficient staffing to respond to potential widespread or multiple events threatening the nation's public health; and,
- Ready communications systems to meet the needs of all audiences, including emergency responders, clinicians and the general public.

HHS and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are providing information to assist the public health community in increasing their level of preparedness for different threat agents. Information on threat agents is available at the CDC website at <http://www.cdc.gov>. General information about the health effects of terrorism threat agents is available at <http://www.bt.cdc.gov> and <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov>

CDC will provide additional information as it is available.

For questions, technical assistance, or to report an event, please contact the CDC Emergency Operations Center – which is open 7 days a week, 24 hours a day – at 770-488-7100.